



Department of Justice

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District of Massachusetts

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FALL RIVER GANG LEADER PLEADS GUILTY TO FEDERAL NARCOTICS OFFENSES

Boston, MA... A Fall River man pleaded guilty in federal court late yesterday to narcotics charges stemming from a joint investigation by federal, state and local authorities aimed at reducing violent crime and drug dealing in the Fall River area.

United States Attorney Michael J. Sullivan; Glenn N. Anderson, Special Agent in Charge of the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives in New England; June W. Stansbury, Special Agent in Charge of the Drug Enforcement Administration; C. Samuel Sutter, Bristol County District Attorney; and John M. Souza, Fall River Police Chief, announced that **MICHAEL PERALTA**, 25, of 151 Quequechan Street, Fall River, Massachusetts, pleaded guilty before U.S. District Judge Joseph L. Tauro to one count of conspiracy to distribute at least 50 grams of cocaine base, also known as "crack cocaine," from May 2005 through June 2, 2005, and three substantive counts of distributing 5 or more grams of crack during that time period.

According to documents filed with the Court, **PERALTA** was described as the leader of the MAFIOSO - a Fall River street gang involved in narcotics trafficking, firearms violations, and violent crimes in the Fall River area.

PERALTA was arrested along with ten other Fall River area men in April 2006, on various federal and state firearms and narcotics charges as a result of investigative efforts under the auspices of the President Bush's Project Safe Neighborhoods program, which makes prosecution of firearms and gang cases a top priority. The Project Safe Neighborhoods program provides a comprehensive, strategic approach to reducing gun violence in America. Since 2002, when the U.S. Attorney's Office implemented Project Safe Neighborhoods, eleven cities across the state, including Fall River, have joined in the program. Federal, state and local authorities involved in this investigation focused on identifying felons in possession of firearms and ammunition, as well as gang members involved in violent crimes and drug dealing in the Fall River area.

Judge Tauro scheduled sentencing for March 20, 2007 at 10:00 a.m. On the conspiracy count, **PERALTA** faces a maximum sentence of life in prison and a mandatory minimum 10 years in prison, to be followed by a mandatory minimum of 5 years of supervised release up to life, and a \$4 million fine. On each of the three distribution counts, **PERALTA** faces a mandatory minimum of 5 years up to a maximum of 40 years in prison, to be followed by a mandatory minimum of 4 years of supervised release up to life, and a \$2 million fine.

The case was investigated by the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives, the U.S. Drug Enforcement Administration, the Fall River Police Department, and the Bristol County District Attorney's Office with assistance from the Tiverton and Bristol, Rhode Island Police Departments. It is being prosecuted by Assistant U.S. Attorney Lisa M. Asiaf in Sullivan's Criminal Division.

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